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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

ACDA-05 BIB-01 EA-07 /073 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6923
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 01549

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, XG
SUBJECT: FRENCH SNIPPETS ON ALBANIA: BUNKERS ON THE
COAST?

REF: PARIS 26645

1. SUMMARY. SINCE FRENCH HAVE RESIDENT AMBASSADOR
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IN TIRANA, EMBOFF EXPLORED QUAI WILLINGNESS SHARE THEIR

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CURRENT IMPRESSIONS ALBANIAN SCENE WITH OFFICER IN CHARGE EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS LEQUERTIER WITH FOLLOWING RESULTS. END SUMMARY.

2. LEQUERTIER PREFACED HIS COMMENTS WITH CAUTION THAT REPORTING ABILITY FRENCH EMBASSY TIRANA CONTINUES TO BE EXCEPTIONALLY CIRCUMSCRIBED AND THAT ITS OUTPUT IS, THEREFORE, SPOTTY AND IN LARGE PART SPECULATIVE. EVEN SO, QUAI HAS OVERALL IMPRESSION THAT TIRANA IS CURRENTLY IN THE GRIPS OF A CERTAIN "FEVERISHNESS" REFLECTING GENUINE ANXIETIES.

3. MOST CURIOUS MANIFESTATION OF THIS STATE OF MIND IS, AS LEQUERTIER DESCRIBED IT, RATHER FRANTIC EFFORT, DATING BACK SEVERAL MONTHS, TO BUILD A CHAIN OF "BUNKERS" ON ALBANIA'S ADRIATIC COAST. LEQUERTIER SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT ALBANIANS HAD CERTAIN REINFORCED SHELTERS IN TIRANA AND HAD UNDERGROUND INSTALLATIONS IN CERTAIN MOUNTAINS. HOWEVER, THIS CURRENT OUTBURST BUILDING ACTIVITY ON COAST IS BELIEVED TO BE UNPRECEDENTED, AND CAN ONLY BE MEANT TO SUGGEST ALBANIANS FEAR THAT SOVIETS MIGHT ATTEMPT LANDING BY SEA. ACCORDING LEQUERTIER THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS ALBANIANS BUILDING SIMILAR BUNKERS ON INTERIOR FRONTIERS. MOREOVER, CONSTRUCTIONS OBSERVED SO FAR ON COAST ARE IN FACT' WHOLLY INADEQUATE TO COPE WITH ANY SERIOUS ASSAULT BY SEA, EVEN IF SUCH A CONTINGENCY WERE NOT AS FAR-FETCHED AS IT IS UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. LEQUERTIER, THEREFORE, CONCLUDES THAT THIS EFFORT REFLECTS EITHER INCREASING PHOBIA OF THE SOVIET UNION ON PART INCREASINGLY INSECURE ISOLATED ALBANIAN LEADERSHIP, OR IS PSYCHOLOGICAL PLOY TO IMPRESS POPULATION WITH POSSIBLE FOREIGN DANGERS TO DIRECT ATTENTION AWAY FROM COUNTRY'S POLITICAL, ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

4. ON THIS SCORE, LEQUERTIER SAID FRENCH HAD IMPRESSION THAT THE FAR-REACHING SHAKEUP IN THE ALBANIAN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR ALSO REFLECTED THE GRAVE

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USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
USCINCEUR
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 01549

INTERNAL UNCERTAINTIES CAUSED BY ALBANIA'S INCREASING
SENSE OF ISOLATION SINCE CHINA IS NOW LESS AND LESS
INTERESTED IN IT. LEQUERTIER THINKS, FOR INSTANCE,
THAT CHINESE ECONOMIC AID TO ALBANIA MUST HAVE BEEN
DECREASED IN RECENT YEARS, JUDGING BY FACT THAT RANK
LEVEL OF DELEGATIONS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN LOWERED.
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FRENCH PRESUME, BUT AGAIN DO NOT CLAIM TO KNOW, THAT

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BASIC ARGUMENT IN TIRANA MUST THEREFORE BE BETWEEN AGING, PERHAPS SICK LEADERSHIP AND OTHER OFFICIALS WHO MAY BE LEANING TOWARD DEGREE OF ACCOMMODATION, EITHER WITH ROMANIAN AND YUGOSLAV NEIGHBORS, OR WITH THE USSR ITSELF. FOR PRESENT ISSUE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN FORECLOSED BY LAST YEAR'S MAJOR PURGE.

5. LEQUERTIER DID NOT VOLUNTEER ANY THOUGHTS WHICH WOULD BUTTRESS OUR EARLIER REPORT (REFTEL) FROM A ROMANIAN SOURCE THAT SOVIETS MAY HAVE MADE CONCERTED EFFORT TO WOO ALBANIANS LAST YEAR.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE OBVIOUSLY NOT ABLE EVALUATE ANY ASPECT OF THIS ACCOUNT, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THE REPORTED BUILDING OF ALBANIAN DEFENSE POSITIONS ON THE COAST, WHICH WE REPORT FOR WHAT IT MAY BE WORTH. WE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE INTERESTED IN COMMENTS FROM WASHINGTON AGENCIES AND ADDRESSEES, PARTICULARLY SINCE QUAI MAY BE WILLING TO CONTINUE EXCHANGES THIS SUBJECT.
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